

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application with the following list of claims:

1-39. (Cancelled)

40. (Currently amended) A method for restoring or maintaining normal aggregation of platelets in [[the]] blood or extracellular fluid of a patient ~~in vitro or in vivo, wherein the patient is~~ subject to or susceptible to lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced generalized coagulation dysfunction, said method comprising administering to the ~~patient's~~ blood or extracellular fluid a therapeutically effective amount of gelsolin, or a functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, ~~under conditions suitable for gelsolin binding, thereby affecting platelet function to restore or maintain normal aggregation of platelets in the blood or extracellular fluid of the patient.~~

41. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, wherein following the administration of the therapeutically effective amount of the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, the ~~patient's~~ blood or extracellular fluid comprises an increased concentration of gelsolin, as compared with the level of gelsolin before administration.

42. (Currently amended) The method of claim 41, wherein the increased concentration of the gelsolin in the patient restores or maintains the normal aggregation of platelets ~~in vivo~~ in the patient, ~~who is otherwise subject to or susceptible to the LPS-induced generalized coagulation dysfunction.~~

43-47. (Cancelled)

48. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises plasma gelsolin.

49. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises amino acid residues 160-169 of gelsolin.

50. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises recombinantly produced or expressed gelsolin.

51. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises SEQ ID NO: 1.